A close-up photograph of a bright yellow sunflower. In the center of the flower's head, where the seeds would be, there is a black circular button with a white power symbol (a circle with a vertical line and a semi-circle at the bottom). The petals are vibrant yellow and slightly blurred at the edges. The background is plain white.

Tricia Emerson
Mary Stewart

the
**TECHNOLOGY
CHANGE**
BOOK change the way you think about technology change

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Tricia Emerson
Mary Stewart



1640 King Street, Box 1443
Alexandria, VA 22313-1443 USA
t: 800.628.2783 703.683.8100
f: 703.683.8103 www.astd.org

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ASTD Press Editorial Staff:

Director: Glenn Saltzman

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PREFACE

Those of us who manage change for a living are fond of saying that it doesn't matter what the change is. Whether it's a new process, technology, organization, market strategy, size, leadership, product, or geography—we follow the same principles to get an organization from point A to point B.

That's true. And yet...every craft has special tools for special jobs. Technology projects have their own challenges, language, pitfalls, and opportunities. It pays to master this particular kind of change, especially when the stakes are so high.

Our consultants have many decades of experience enabling the benefits of technology by influencing human performance. Along the way, we've been a part of great successes for our clients. We've innovated and learned. We've seen what stalls a project and what clears the way to a win.

This is the book we wish we'd had on some of those projects. Each short chapter holds one good idea. They might give you a fresh thought, jump-start a conversation with your team, or change your perspective. It's not a comprehensive guide or methodology, it's a collection of our best ideas for technology change. We want to inspire you, whether you're new to the field or a seasoned practitioner, to Step Up™ your game.

Our book is simple and flexible. You don't have to read front to back—turn to any chapter that interests you. Read in any order you want. Each chapter is designed to be easy to digest. Pick it up, read a chapter or two, then put it down until you have another few minutes.

There's no more critical or fast-moving practice than technology and we'd love to advance the conversation. We hope you find a few nuggets of wisdom to make your own.

FOREWORD

Everyone experiences change. All the time, whether you realize it or not. And it's pretty safe to say that everyone experiences technology change. After all, who among us isn't affected by technology in our daily lives, both at work and outside of work? But not everyone is responsible for technology change. This book is for those who are.

Change is hard, and technology change is no exception. There is the actual technology itself that changes, but there is also the impact of that change on the people who use the technology that must be considered and carefully managed. Technology that "works" perfectly but isn't understood or used properly will not yield the desired results. The people side of technology change is critical.

While no two change efforts are exactly the same, the anatomy of most technology change is remarkably similar. *The Technology Change Book* lays out a succinct approach to managing technology change.

Step Up™

Change is constant. The winners scale to a new level, stabilize and perform at that level, then plan the next ascent.

“The project’s not over when the project is over. You’ve got to track, measure results, capture knowledge, learn from it. So often you spend all of this money, and you have your big go-live and next quarter it’s like old history—no one’s paying attention any longer. I really believe that you have to stay on top of these projects for a long time afterward, just to make sure...to continue to reinforce the company’s getting the benefit from the investment.”

JIM HAAR | VP, GLOBAL ACCOUNTS, CUSTOMER SUCCESS AND
TECHNICAL EXCELLENCE, HP



The old mindset. | We do a BIG technology project. Just after we go live, there's a dip in productivity. But we try to get through that part as quickly and smoothly as possible. We recover, and return to somewhat higher levels of productivity and success. We made it through the valley, and now we're back to business as usual. But sometimes people revert to old ways. Or, worse, they're still rewarded for doing things the old way. So some of the benefits erode.

The new reality. | We can't afford to take years to get better. And we can't afford a dip in performance. And we certainly can't afford to lose any of the gains we make, after we go live. And, by the way, the next technology change is coming sooner than we think; we can't be caught flat-footed when it hits.

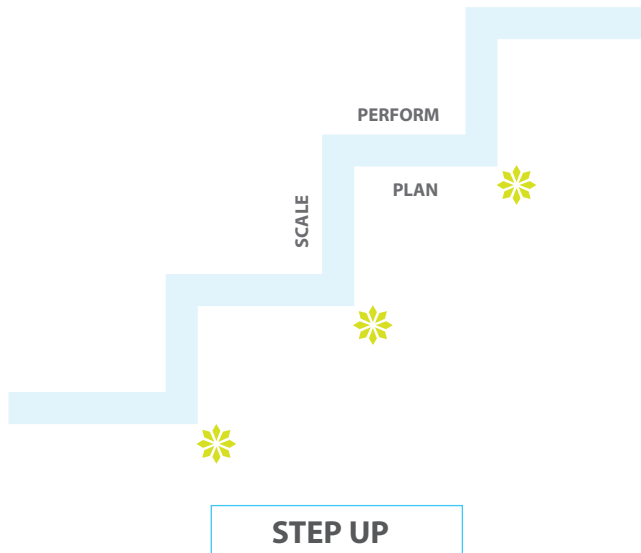
The imperative of the winner. | We have to make sure we hit our goal, stay at that level so we can build strength, and then step up again when the next change comes. Step up, stabilize at that level, and step up again. Always upward.





DIP AND RECOVER

THE TRADITIONAL COMPANY | Big changes are few, and the company always starts from “zero” for each project. The goal is to reduce the duration of the inevitable performance dip, after the change. It sometimes loses some of the performance gain, through lack of discipline.



THE ATHLETIC COMPANY | Strong, agile, and competitive. It lives in constant cycles, preparing for the next ascent as it maintains the current level of performance.



SCALE

“Scale” includes all your hard work on the project, through go-live.

The business case included the measurable and agreed-upon targets—your indicators of success.

Now it’s time to circle back to make sure those expectations were met. Did you move the needle? Does everyone agree you did? Then call it a win!

HOW TO DO IT

- ♦ Measure critical behaviors against their targets.
- ♦ Measure individual and team performance against their targets.
- ♦ Measure business performance against its targets.
- ♦ Find the problem areas, correct and re-measure, if necessary. You are not finished with the project until you hit your targets and meet the business case.
- ♦ SELL IT. Communicate the win—make sure everyone knows the change met its goals and the new way is here to stay.



PERFORM

Now that you've stepped up, don't step down! Your project was a success—not only because the technology works differently, but because the organization works differently. Just as you monitor, test, and maintain the new system, you have to monitor, test, and maintain the organization. You have a new steady state.

HOW TO DO IT

- ♦ Build new behaviors and performance metrics into role and job descriptions, job support materials, and recruiting processes.
- ♦ Make sure people are measured and rewarded for the new behaviors and performance goals. Build them into compensation and career paths.
- ♦ Align relationships with third parties to the new way of doing business, so people and teams aren't conflicted.
- ♦ Celebrate the new behaviors and business results. Visibly embrace the change and the teams that are keeping it strong.



PLAN

Now that you are solid and performing well on a higher plateau, get ready for the next step. Build your “change muscles” as an organization, so you’re stronger the next time. That means taking advantage of each project and each bit of downtime, so you’re ready to step up.

HOW TO DO IT

- ♦ Lessons learned are gold, and you have to save your loot. Record and retell stories of HOW you were successful.
- ♦ Sharpen your tools for next time. If you used or developed a great tool for making the change work, make sure it’s sanitized, labeled, archived, and owned by someone.
- ♦ Anticipate the next ascent. Look at the industry, the competition, the opportunities, and what hasn’t been done before. Determine the path forward and what you need to be successful.
- ♦ Hopefully you seeded your project with people from all stakeholder groups. They are your veterans—they’ve seen a big change, close up. Have them go forth and multiply. Give them time and resources to train others to be change agents. And, for sure, pull some of them onto your team for the next technology change.



WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR CHANGE PROFESSIONALS?

Change is constant, so does that mean you're constantly with your client? No. You must always operate against clear exit criteria.

Back when you were defining the scope of work, you should have tied your working agreement to the client's business case. What did they need from you? How would you all know when your team had delivered?

That's not a unilateral decision, by the way; it takes partnership. The client organization should define success. And you, change professional, should recommend, based on experience, when your client can continue to be successful without you.

Think of it as a doctor/patient relationship. As the doctor, when will you agree to "release the patient?" Of course, the patient might sign himself out, against your orders. But professional integrity demands that you try to make sure he's healthy before you part ways. Make sure they've stepped up, and they're ready for next time.

